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INFO RHHMUNA/USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0003  
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 0006  
RUEHBN/AMCONSUL MELBOURNE 0005  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0014  
RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY 0016  
RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE 0003  
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0001  
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA 0003  
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 0003  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0003  
RUEHNZ/AMCONSUL AUCKLAND 0013  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 0003  
RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA 0004  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0003  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 WELLINGTON 000213

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS  
AIAG FOR WINN  
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TAGS: [TBIO](#) [AEMR](#) [CW](#) [NZ](#) [PREL](#) [KSAF](#) [KPAO](#) [KFLU](#)  
SUBJECT: New Zealand H1N1 SitRep July 13, 2009

REF: WELLINGTON 177, WELLINGTON 169

11. (SBU) Summary. New Zealanders are becoming increasingly concerned over H1N1 Influenza A (swine flu) as the virus spreads throughout the general population, causing serious illness and several deaths since the end of June. The public health sector has reported increased activity related to H1N1 as the NZ public becomes more concerned about the virus' effect. The Government of New Zealand (GNZ) has also publicized work being done on two different vaccines to protect public health workers and the general population. The Cook Islands reported their first confirmed case of H1N1 flu in their jurisdiction, but are facing challenges in timely evaluation for other potential cases. Post feels that GNZ has dealt with H1N1 in a manner that makes best use of NZ's resources. End summary.

Public Fears Rise in New Zealand as First H1N1 Deaths Reported

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12. (U) The mood of the New Zealand public has shifted since the first deaths associated with H1N1 Influenza A were reported by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the media on weekend of July 4-5. By in large, New Zealanders have been cautious about flu risks and cooperative with New Zealand health authorities since April when H1N1 flu was recognized as a health threat. However, the three reported deaths over the July 4-5 weekend and additional four deaths the following week, rapid growth in confirmed infection cases (now totaling over 1000 cases), and the impact of regular seasonal flu have all raised the level of concern in the public. The Government has made repeated statements acknowledging the deaths and concerns of the public, but for the most part has noted that cases of serious illness and death were regrettably expected from at-risk populations as the virus spreads through the country.

¶3. (U) The MoH and general health practitioners have reported an increase in calls to help-lines and in office consultations since the week of June 29, and local press have reported on a near-daily basis on H1N1 stories across the country. There is also growing concern in the public from media and MoH reports that some severe cases are being exhibited in patients with no pre-existing health problems.

#### GNZ has Two-Pronged Vaccine Plan

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¶4. (U) MoH has reported on two separate orders for an H1N1 vaccine over the week of July 6, with an initial order for 300,000 doses from U.S. provider Baxter for up to 150,000 front-line health care workers (two doses per worker) to be available as early as August. The Government has emphatically stated that the vaccine was only for health care workers, and that politicians and public servants would not be eligible for the initial doses. The general population will be offered treatment from a second 8 million dose vaccine order from Australian provider CSL, but that order will not be ready until the end of the year. MoH Deputy Director for Public Health Fran McGrath noted that the Baxter order was requested when it became clear that the CSL vaccine would not be available soon

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enough to provide protection to the public health system which is already starting to see problems crop up with staff illness in some districts. MoH is also starting to offer free seasonal flu shots to all NZ citizens in an effort to reduce strain at clinics and hospitals.

#### Cook Islands See First H1N1 Case

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¶5. (U) Cook Islands (CI) authorities have reported the first confirmed H1N1 case in their jurisdiction over the 4th of July weekend. The case was a 14-year old boy who had recently returned from New Zealand. CI authorities appear to be implementing a containment policy similar to NZ's earlier this year, but may be experiencing difficulties in getting timely testing as all samples must be returned to NZ, which houses the closest WHO-certified lab.

¶6. (SBU) Comment. It is likely that the NZ MoH's containment plan, in place since April, has contributed greatly to the delay of widespread H1N1 infection across the country until now, even though NZ was one of the first countries to report infection. Post judges the GNZ approach to the virus, to date, to be proficient given the resources at its disposal. Health Minister Tony Ryall has deservedly received plaudits for his management of the outbreak and prospects are good for a continuation of the GNZ's effective H1N1 strategy. End Comment.  
KEEGAN